

# The Missouri Senate Chamber



## Tour Guide

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*"Nothing is Politically Right  
That is Morally Wrong."*

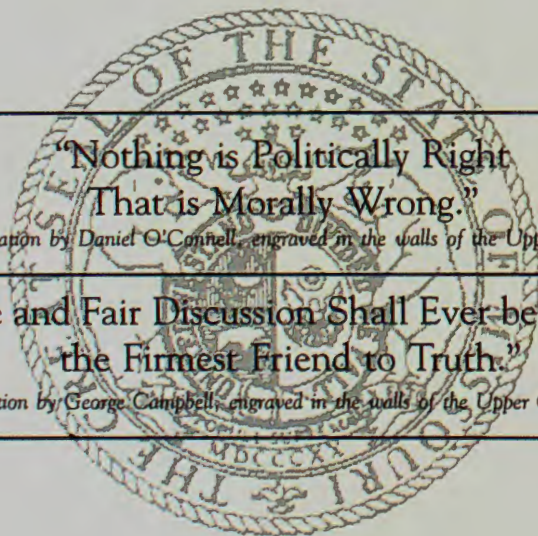
*- Quotation by Daniel O'Connell, engraved in the walls of the Upper Chamber.*

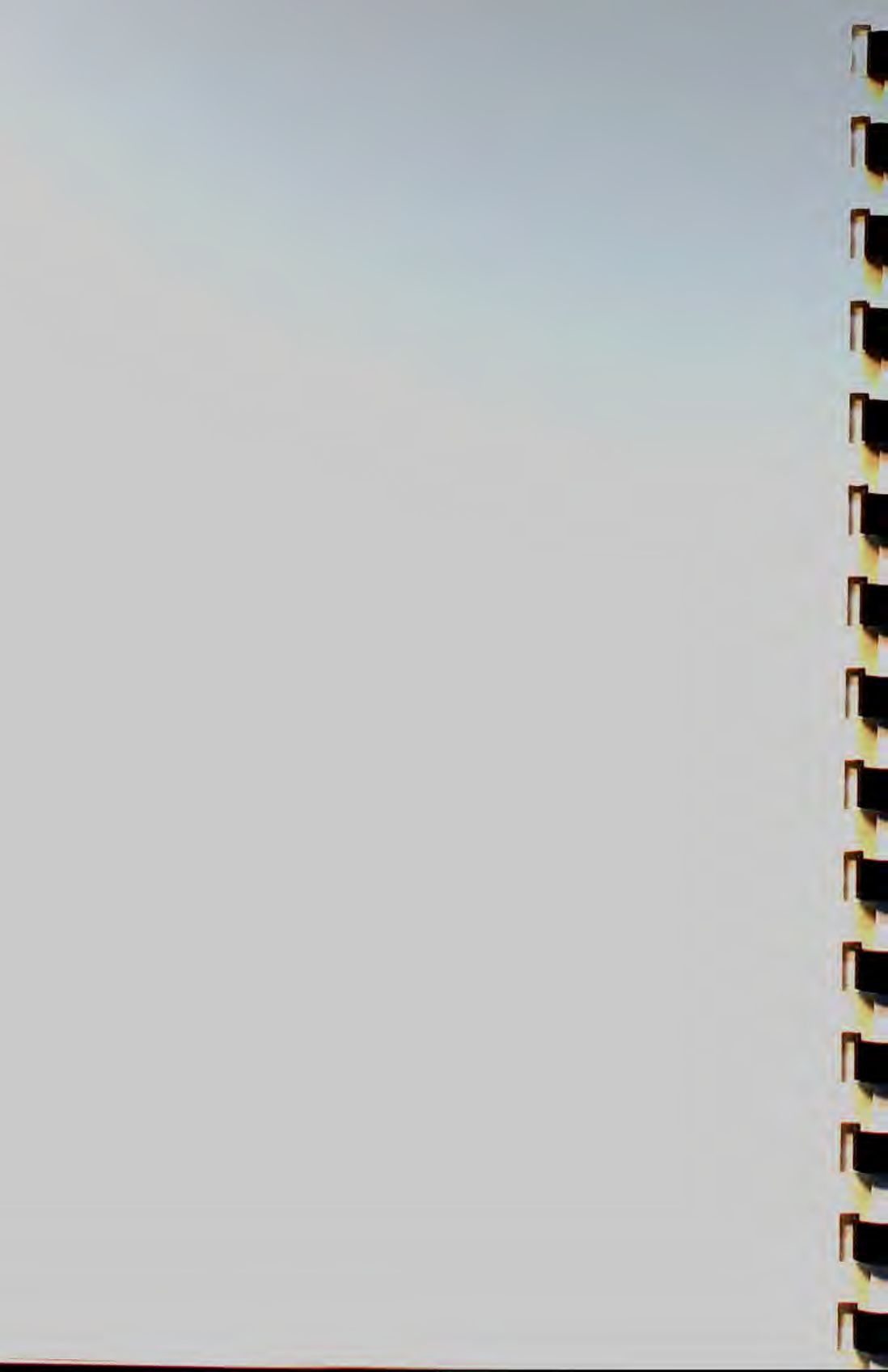
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*"Free and Fair Discussion Shall Ever be Found  
the Firmest Friend to Truth."*

*-Quotation by George Campbell, engraved in the walls of the Upper Chamber.*

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# The Senate Chamber

The Senate Chamber is the center of activity for lawmakers serving in the upper body of the Legislature. The room measures 68 feet by 70 feet, featuring a rich fabric ceiling 50 feet above the floor of the chamber.

The room is described by its creator, architect Egerton Swartwout, as a large and lofty room, perfect acoustically, dignified in treatment with a semi-circular colonnade of richly-veined marble, resting high upon a marble base.



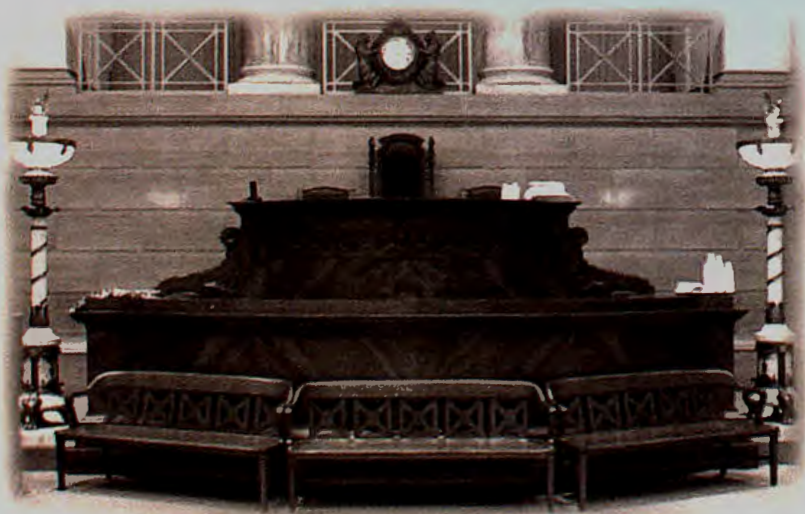
## The Dais

The Senate Dais is the vantage point from which the presiding officer directs debate and maintains decorum during sessions of the Senate.

The dais, handcrafted and assembled in the chamber as part of the building's original construction, is made of American Walnut. Intricate carvings depicting Missouri's rich agricultural heritage circumscribe the upper exterior of the dais and the expansive volutes that flank each side in a decorative motif of corn stalks and sheaves of wheat.



The dais is encircled by a wraparound desk made of the same Missouri hardwood. The desk provides a work area for the Secretary of the Senate who is required by Missouri's constitution to maintain a journal of all Senate proceedings, and the reader, who reads aloud the texts of measures before the Senate.



The President's Chair, left, is of hand-carved American Walnut. The chair features three-dimensional renderings of bears to complement the Senate clock located above the dais.



*The President's Chair (center)*

## Upper Galleries

The tiered galleries of Missouri's Senate Chamber provide a vantage point from which citizens can observe lawmakers working on the Senate floor.

The chamber's center gallery seats 170 and the north gallery seats 48. The south gallery, which is also accessible to those with disabilities, seats 37.



Each of the 255 wood-backed seats is upholstered in neutral colors and framed in steel of hunter green. Cast iron uprights, also hunter green with detailing highlighted in gold paint, serve as aisle caps for each row of seating.

The wrought iron railings surrounding the three galleries and flanking gallery staircases were carefully cleaned and polished to a stately bronze-like finish during a comprehensive restoration in 2001. Gallery doors, walls and fixtures were also restored to their original condition during the renovation.



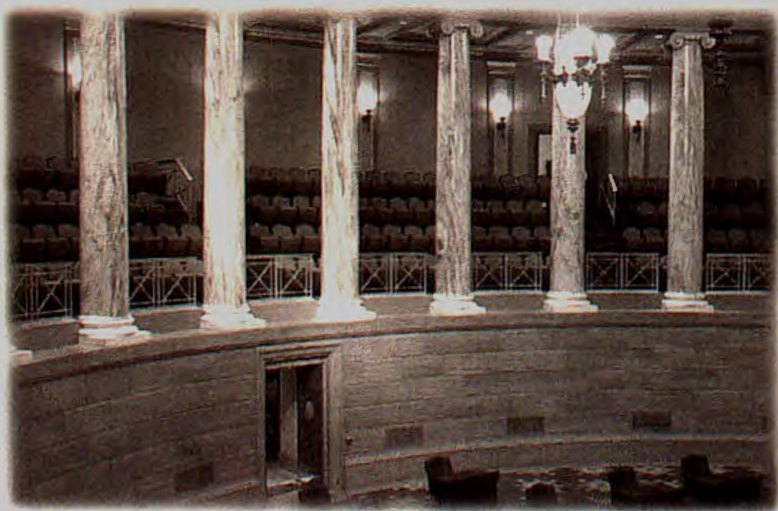
*Aisle Cap Detail*



## Marble Walls and Columns

The most distinctive features that define the Senate Chamber are the 16 towering columns that support the ceiling of the great room. These columns stand atop polished walls made of Carthage Marble blocks taken from the Phenix Quarry in Greene County. The columns, topped by Ionic capitals, are made of polished New Hampshire marble.

The marble in the columns is one of the few materials used in the Capitol that is not from Missouri. Twelve of the columns stand in front of the upper galleries. Four columns rise behind the president's dais, framing the rostrum and the painted-glass window of Hernando DeSoto that rises behind it.



*The majestic marble columns and walls of the Upper Chamber reflect classic influence.*

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The columns and their richly veined color were integral to the design planned by Charles A. W. Rinschede of New York, who was responsible for coordinating the decorations of the Upper Chamber.

## Artwork in the Senate Chamber

Key periods of Missouri history are depicted on four murals and a painted glass window in the Senate Chamber. Richard E. Miller, an American Impressionist and native of St. Louis, painted the murals in 1915. The murals in the Senate Chamber stand among an impressive collection of his works displayed throughout the United States and Europe.

The Missouri Capitol Commission Board wanted Miller's work in the Senate chamber, and solicited a friend of the Millers to propose the idea to him. The friend met with Miller and broached the subject over dinner. He was hesitant at first, but then agreed to accept the job if the money was adequate. When he was told the Commission could only pay \$12,000 for two murals, he flew into a rage and refused. Miller's wife spoke up and told him that Missouri was his native state and his home, and it had been good to them. She said the new Capitol was of outstanding beauty and that she wanted his paintings to be a part of it. Miller finally agreed, and not only painted the two murals for \$12,000, but also agreed to do two more for the same price.

Miller also designed the painted-glass window above the presiding officer's chair. The window, made by Paris-Wiley of New York, shows the landing of Hernando DeSoto, the first white man to set foot on Missouri soil.

Miller later painted a small mural above the Governor's elevator, which shows the first Missouri Capitol building. The mural is the only work by the artist in the Capitol, outside of the Senate Chamber.





*This painted glass window is located above and behind the Dais in the Senate Chamber.*

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## The Painted Window

### *Hernando DeSoto Lands in America*

Under commission of the Spanish crown in 1538, Hernando DeSoto's army crossed the Atlantic to explore the Spanish region of Florida. More than a year later, he disembarked in Havana, Cuba, to reorganize his men and supplies. They continued on to what is now Tampa Bay, Florida. DeSoto led his men through the untamed wilderness, crossed the Mississippi River, and is believed to have spent the winter in what is now Northern Arkansas.

DeSoto and his men searched for gold, but found only salt in excursions through the Ozark Mountains. Unable to find the treasure he sought, he soon lost his closest allies and translators to illness. DeSoto himself succumbed to illness and died in the spring of 1542. For fear that Indians might dig his corpse up if buried, his men wrapped his weighted body in blankets and placed him in Lake Chicot, in southeastern Arkansas. His army abandoned the mission and fled to Mexico City, Spain's nearest outpost.

The window represents the beginning of DeSoto's historic expedition. He is shown as a majestic figure in armor on horseback, having just completed the long journey by sea. With hopes of finding land rich with gold, he is pressing forward with his men. Indians stand on the shore, awaiting his arrival.



# Murals in the Senate Chamber



*Daniel Boone at the Judgment Tree*

## Daniel Boone at the Judgment Tree

### *The Colonial Period*

This mural represents the colonial period of Missouri. Daniel Boone is seated at the base of the famous Judgment Tree, with his gun across his knees. His wife stands behind him. He is watching the accusers who have brought a culprit before him, a man with hands bound. Boone held the position of Syndic, or Commandant of the Femme Osage District, Missouri being under Spanish rule. Note the Spanish flag in the background. He was vested with the entitlement of judge, jury and sheriff, and could order the guilty party whipped, banished or killed. Historical accounts say his decisions were widely accepted as just and fair.

During the colonial period, Missouri had three classes of people: the Indians, the French adventurers and the traders, who lived on good terms with the Indians. Boone was regarded as a brave pioneer and hunter. He came to Missouri in 1799 at the request of Zenon Trudeau, the Spanish governor of St. Louis. Boone accepted a grant of land on the Femme Osage River west of St. Charles. Missouri had just a few towns, and Boone said he wanted only to hunt in some unfrequented corner of the woods. The earliest explorers earned their keep by hunting deer, bear and beaver. Beaver skins were especially valuable because the fur was shipped to Europe and made into top hats — the day's fashion for the wealthy. As they hunted, the explorers made maps of the land and noted resources for the families who would follow.

Boone influenced many to migrate to Missouri, and is given credit for turning Missouri into the Mother of the West. When he died in 1820, the territory had passed into statehood, and the State Legislature adjourned for a day in his honor.

Daniel Boone was a man who truly loved Missouri.



## Jefferson greeting Lewis and Clark

### *The Territorial Period*

This mural represents the territorial period in Missouri history. President Thomas Jefferson commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the Louisiana Territory soon after buying the expanse of land from France for \$15 million in 1803. The land we now know as Missouri, acquired by the United States in the Louisiana Purchase, became the 24th state when admitted to the Union in 1821.

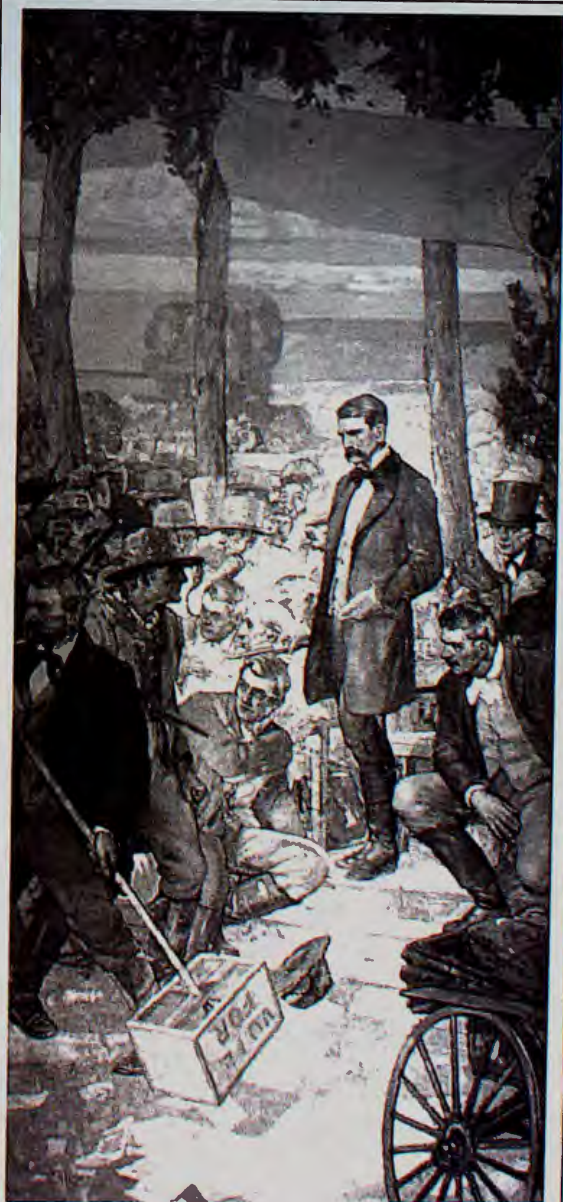
The painting depicts Jefferson on the porch of the White House after Lewis and Clark returned from exploring the Louisiana Territories. (Jefferson is shaking Clark's hand, Lewis stands to the right.) The pair had begun their great expedition in 1804, departing St. Louis. They recorded every step of their journey to the Pacific before returning almost two years later. They went on to Washington to report their findings to Jefferson. This was the first time Jefferson had met Clark; Lewis had formerly been Jefferson's secretary. Both explorers were later appointed as statesmen for the land that is now Missouri.

The other people shown in the painting are friends and servants to the President and companions of the explorers. Indians are shown with products of the Great West. Lewis and Clark became famous for exploring the new American land and its vast natural resources.



*Jefferson greeting Lewis and Clark*





*Blair's Speech at Louisiana, Missouri*

## Blair's Speech at Louisiana, Missouri

### *The Civil War Era*

The mural depicts Francis P. Blair, who is credited with keeping Missouri in the Union during the Civil War. He was a Union general and fought for the Union throughout the Civil War. When Grant was asked to name his bravest and most efficient fighting generals, he named Blair and General John A. Logan. (Logan served in the U.S. Congress after the war, and is famous as the founder of Memorial Day.)

In 1865 the "Drake Constitution" was adopted in Missouri, stating that before a man could vote in this state, he had to take an oath swearing that he had not given aid or comfort to the Confederate cause.

General Blair made a statewide canvass as he campaigned for a U.S. Senate seat. Blair's first Democratic speech was to be given in Louisiana, Missouri. Blair was sent word that he would be assassinated upon his arrival, but arrived in Louisiana in spite of the threats. Upon taking the platform, he unbuckled his holster and laid two pistols in front of him. "I understand that I am to be shot if I speak here today," he said. "Perhaps we would better attend to this ceremony now." No attempt was made to kill him. When he began to speak a red faced fellow in the audience jumped up and shouted, "He's a damned rebel. Throw him out." Pointing his finger at the man, Blair shouted back, "You come and throw me out!" This is the confrontation depicted in the mural. Blair's commanding presence held the crowd in check; he finished his speech, and carried his campaign on into Moberly, Marshall and Warrensburg.

Historically, Blair well represents Missouri in the Civil War era. When the White House asked Missouri to name two of her greatest sons to be placed in Statuary Hall in Washington, the unanimous vote was for Thomas H. Benton and Frank P. Blair.





*Benton's Speech at St. Louis*

## Benton's Speech at St. Louis

### *The Era of Westward Expansion*

This mural represents the period of westward expansion of Missouri — the gateway to the west. Senator Thomas H. Benton was known for constantly predicting the great future of the West. For several years, he tried to persuade Congress to appropriate funds to build a railroad from St. Louis to the Pacific. The eastern states' delegation argued the West was merely a land of deserts and savages, but Benton continued to rally for his cause.

Benton was also known for the length of his speeches, and is shown here addressing a mass gathering in the St. Louis Courthouse in 1849. On the platform behind him are seated Mayor John M. Drum and Stephen A. Douglas. Douglas, an Illinois Congressman, is known for sponsoring the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, which popularized the idea of popular sovereignty. He is also credited with making Chicago a major railroad hub of the Midwest.

Isaac H. Sturgeon is shown with a tall hat in the audience at Benton's left. Sturgeon was the first president of the North Missouri Railroad, or Wabash. The man with sideburns is Thomas Allen, second president of the Pacific Railroad. The man to his right is John O'Fallon, the first president of the Pacific Railroad. Shown with folded arms is Trusten Polk, later governor of Missouri and a U.S. Congressman.

Critics and historians have been impressed with the composition of this mural in comparison with the other three because of the skill with which the artist filled the disproportionate canvas, a section of wall 19 feet high, but only eight feet wide. It is with great precision that Miller shows Benton upon the completion of his famous address, conveying the opposition of the crowd and the confidence of the speaker. Sen. Thomas H. Benton was the grandfather of Thomas Hart Benton, who later painted the famous murals in the Missouri Capitol's House Lounge.



## The Quotes Between the Murals in the Chamber

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*“Free and fair discussion will ever be found the firmest friend to truth.”*

This famous quote, nestled between “Jefferson Greeting Lewis and Clark” and “Daniel Boone at the Judgment Tree,” is the basis for the uninterrupted discussion on the Senate floor. It is attributed to George Campbell (1719-1796), a Scottish writer, theologian and lecturer.

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*“Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.”*

These words, found between the murals “Blair’s Speech at Louisiana, Missouri” and “Benton’s Speech at St. Louis,” are credited to Daniel O’Connell (1775-1847), an Irish attorney known as “The Liberator,” who fought for the legal rights of Roman Catholics under English Law.

## Fretwork & Moulding

A tasteful combination of classic millwork and intricate bas-relief is found throughout the Senate Chamber.

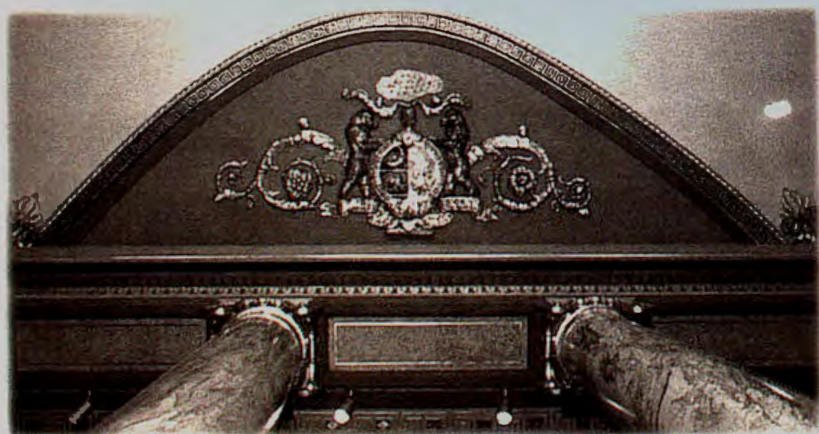
The ornamental filigree and bas-relief patterns along the dome’s base and interior are carved in plaster and wood. During the restoration project, each segment of every carving was carefully stripped, cleaned and re-coated in the closest possible match to the original finish.

Moulding, in an array of scrolled fretwork and varied patterns, serves to define the



chamber's interior borders. As with the carvings, every inch of millwork was carefully stripped, cleaned and painstakingly refinished.

In order to ensure the authenticity of the newly applied finishes, Senate historians documented and compared the chamber's interior prior to the restoration with archived accountings and photographs.



## Lighting

A carefully planned combination of skylights and chandeliers illuminate the Upper Chamber and highlight the magnificent stonework, marble columns and rich walnut furnishings that grace the center of Senate activity.

Crowning the rich fabric ceiling 50 feet above the center of the room is an ocular window made up of 20 glass panes.

The panes are molded in brass and form a circle surrounded by designs of Missouri's state flower, the Hawthorne. The glass panels are framed in brass to complement the central panels.

From the chamber and galleries, the glass panels appear to be light blue in color. The panels are actually a neutral color and derive their distinctive blue shade from an exterior skylight made of small glass blocks. These once-clear blocks have changed color due to oxidization from the continued effect of sunlight on them over most of the past century.



From the skylight hang four majestic chandeliers whose illumination blends with the natural light that filters into the room, shifting highlights as the sun travels across the sky.

The chandeliers are cast of bronze and are hand-finished.

The north and south walls feature vertical skylights that accent the main lighting of the chamber. Each skylight is crested with a magnificent rendition of the state seal, complete with gilded crown, shield and grizzly bears that are unique to the emblem of the State of Missouri.



*The ocular window is the visual focal point of the Chamber.*

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*Chandelier*



*Vertical Skylight*

# Carpet

To maintain the historical integrity of the chamber during the renovation, the carpeting was replaced with Exminster wool carpeting from England. While the type of wool matches the original chamber carpeting, a pattern was added to highlight the effect of the floor covering in the room.

Produced in three pieces, the chamber floor carpet is an olive green in background, on which large circular designs remindful of the interior of the Senate dome are woven at regularly spaced intervals.

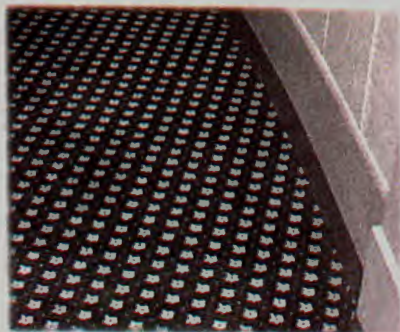
The gallery carpeting is a slightly darker green in background color and is punctuated with clusters of four white petals, which are found on Missouri's state tree, the flowering Dogwood.



*Chamber Carpet Detail*



*Chamber Floor Carpet*



*Gallery Floor Carpet*



## Senate Galleries

Two side galleries adjacent to the north and south entrances serve as anterooms to the Senate Chamber. In keeping with the historic themes throughout the Senate Chamber, each of these galleries is dedicated to a prominent figure in Missouri history.

**Pershing Gallery:** The north gallery is known as the Pershing Gallery, in commemoration of General John Joseph "Black Jack" Pershing. Pershing was a Missouri native who led the American Expeditionary Force in Europe in World War I. For his efforts, Pershing was promoted to General of the Armies in 1919, making him the highest ranking general in American history.



**Bingham Gallery:** The south gallery is named the Bingham Gallery, honoring George Caleb Bingham. This artist's paintings depicted Missouri in the 1840s and 1850s, and the exceptional quality of his work earned him international fame. Although best known for his artwork, Bingham also served as state treasurer and as adjutant general of Missouri.

Shown on this page are the respective portraits in the senate galleries honoring these great Missourians. The portraits were painted by E.L. Blumenschein, N.A., of Taos and New York.



## Inner Gallery

One of the innermost galleries that is used primarily as a meeting room for the Senators is located between the chamber and the rotunda, and has been designated the **Kirchoff Gallery**.

Mr. Kirchoff, who passed away April 27, 2004, was a fixture in the Missouri Senate for 34 years, serving as Director of Printing and Mailing, Director of Research and the position he was most well-known for, that of the first Senate Administrator in Missouri history. Former Sen. Harold Caskey led a motion to name the gallery after Mr. Kirchoff, and the motion was adopted.



This plaque hangs in the gallery in remembrance of Mr. Kirchhoff.



A web version of this guide can be accessed online at:  
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/05info/press-room/tourguide/index.html>



